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Diversification Canada

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Your File Votre référence

Our File Notre référence
A-2020-00026

Via e-mail

July 3, 2020

Mr. Dylan Robertson
501- 150 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1P 5A4
dylan.robertson@freepress.mb.ca

Dear Mr. Robertson:

This letter is in response to your request made pursuant to the *Access to Information Act* (the Act), which was received by Western Economic Diversification Canada on June 30, 2020 requesting access to the following record:

“Briefing Notes from Western EcDev: Prairie Federal Council Special Meeting in response to COVID-19 pandemic 2020-03-23 Ref # Edm200323-17100.”

Enclosed, you will find the record you requested. Please note that some of the information, contained within this record, has been withheld under section 19(1) [personal information] of the Act.

Under the Act, you are entitled to bring a written complaint regarding the processing of your request, to the Information Commissioner of Canada, within 60 days after receipt of this letter. In the event you decide to avail yourself of this right, your notice of complaint can be submitted through the [online complaint form](#) or mailed to:

The Information Commissioner of Canada
30 Victoria Street, 7th Floor
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 1H3
Telephone: (613) 995-2410 (National Capital Region)
1-800-267-0441 (Toll-free)

You may obtain additional information on the complaint process by visiting the website of the Office of the Information Commissioner at www.oic-ci.gc.ca.

Should you have any queries regarding the completion of your request, please Janet Cummings, ATIP Officer, by email at janet.cummings@canada.ca.

Sincerely,

Michelle Owens
A/Deputy Access to Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosure



BRIEFING NOTE FOR THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR DECISION AND SIGNATURE

TITLE: Prairie Federal Council Special Meeting in response to COVID-19 pandemic

RECOMMENDATION:

- It is recommended that you convene a special meeting of the Prairie Federal Council (PFC) during the week of March 23, 2020. The meeting will support federal coordination and emergency management efforts, as well as whole of government situational awareness about COVID-19.

SUMMARY:

- PFC members for Public Safety Canada, Shane Levesque, and the Public Health Agency of Canada, Dina Juras, approached the PFC Secretariat on March 18, 2020 to develop a Prairie region approach to share information about ongoing efforts by their departments and to ensure an integrated Government of Canada response to the current COVID-19 event.
- On March 20, Public Safety Canada (PSC) stood-up a single PSC Prairies and Northwest Territories Event Team, which will operate out of Regina.
- PSC issued a formal Notification to advise that the Regional Office is activating to a Level 2 Response (Risk Assessment and Planning). The notification includes information about the event team structure, key points of contact, and business cycles in District Offices in Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg.
- The Prairie region is the only region that lacks an executive level Federal Coordinating Group (FCG). Please see Annex A for details on COVID-19 Governance Structure as described in the *Federal Emergency Response Plan*.
- PSC, with support from PHAC and the Secretariat, request that you convene a special PFC meeting to support information sharing in our region, and the establishment of a regional executive level FCG.
- The request for a special meeting is in keeping with the mandate of the regional federal councils and is consistent with your role as the PFC Chair.
- PSC's draft FCG communications message for PFC members is attached as Annex B.
- A draft agenda for the PFC special meeting is attached as Annex C.

ANALYSIS:

- The Government of Canada's Response Plan for COVID-19 identifies four phases: Contain; Delay/Prepare; Mitigate; and Recovery.
- The federal response is rapidly evolving. PHAC anticipates that we will transition to the "Mitigate" phase imminently as both Alberta and Manitoba have declared states of emergency.
- Levels of engagement and implicated departments will change as the situation continues to evolve in the Prairie region.

Prepared by:	Name:	Tamara Kane	3/19/2020	Phone number:	
	Title:	Manager, PFC Secretariat		780 495-3549	CCM #
Approved by:	Name:		3/19/2020	Phone number:	Edm200323-17100

- Despite previous attempts to obtain buy-in for a region-wide FCG by PSC, an integrated region-wide FCG does not currently exist.
- A FCG is an executive level structure (Ex-01- Ex02), chaired by the Regional Director of PS, to share situational awareness of the emergency event and to support federal coordination. It supports communication flow between technical experts housed in the Federal Coordination Centres and regional executives.
- PSC has identified 18 federal departments and agencies to support a proposed Prairie Region FCG.
- PSC compiled the initial list based on the membership lists of the three provincial senior leaders' tables.
- PSC is asking PFC members to validate the list as pre-work to the special meeting. The draft FCG membership list is attached as Annex D.
- PSC appreciates the limitations of engagement at Council and targets an 80% solution. PSC will find other methods to fill remaining gaps.
- To date, the PFC Secretariat has not undertaken a federal coordination role and has limited its COVID-19 activities to sharing messages on behalf of PHAC.
- There is a desire by departments to understand each other's response activities.
- The PFC Secretariat received inquiries from Indigenous Services Canada and Service Canada members regarding Council's potential coordination and information sharing role on March 13 and 17, respectively.
- Respecting the Health portfolio's lead role in managing the response to COVID-19 and PSC's role to coordinate the broader federal response to events, there is value in developing a way forward that minimizes duplication of efforts and engages the wider PFC membership.
- The proposed special meeting is an attempt to mitigate risk with respect to emergency management efforts and to demonstrate the leadership role of Councils by convening members to support whole of government situational awareness.

Involvement of RFCs in COVID-19

- To date, there has been a varied approach by Councils to gather intelligence and support regional activities regarding COVID-19 in response to Privy Council Office (PCO) request for Councils and RDA DMs to play a leadership role.
- Quebec and BCFC Executive Council have organized special meetings related to COVID-19.
- Atlantic is coordinating weekly 30-minute information exchange meetings and collating regional input regarding the impacts of COVID-19. AFC reports to PCO on a weekly basis.
- Ontario Council is sharing communications and facilitating appropriate representation in regional working groups and communities of interest.

BACKGROUND:

- SK Senior Leaders Table meets on March 24.
- The AB Senior Leaders Tables met on March 20. Departments expressed desire to meet every two weeks to share information.
- MB Senior Leaders Table met on March 13th.

Enclosures

Annex A – Details on COVID-19 Governance Structure - **separate attachment.**

Annex B – Draft message for circulation to Prairie Federal Council Members, prepared by Public Safety Canada

Annex C – Draft agenda for the PFC special meeting, prepared by the PFC Secretariat.

Annex D – Draft membership list prepared by PSC for validation by PFC members - **separate attachment.**

ANNEX B – GOVERNANCE

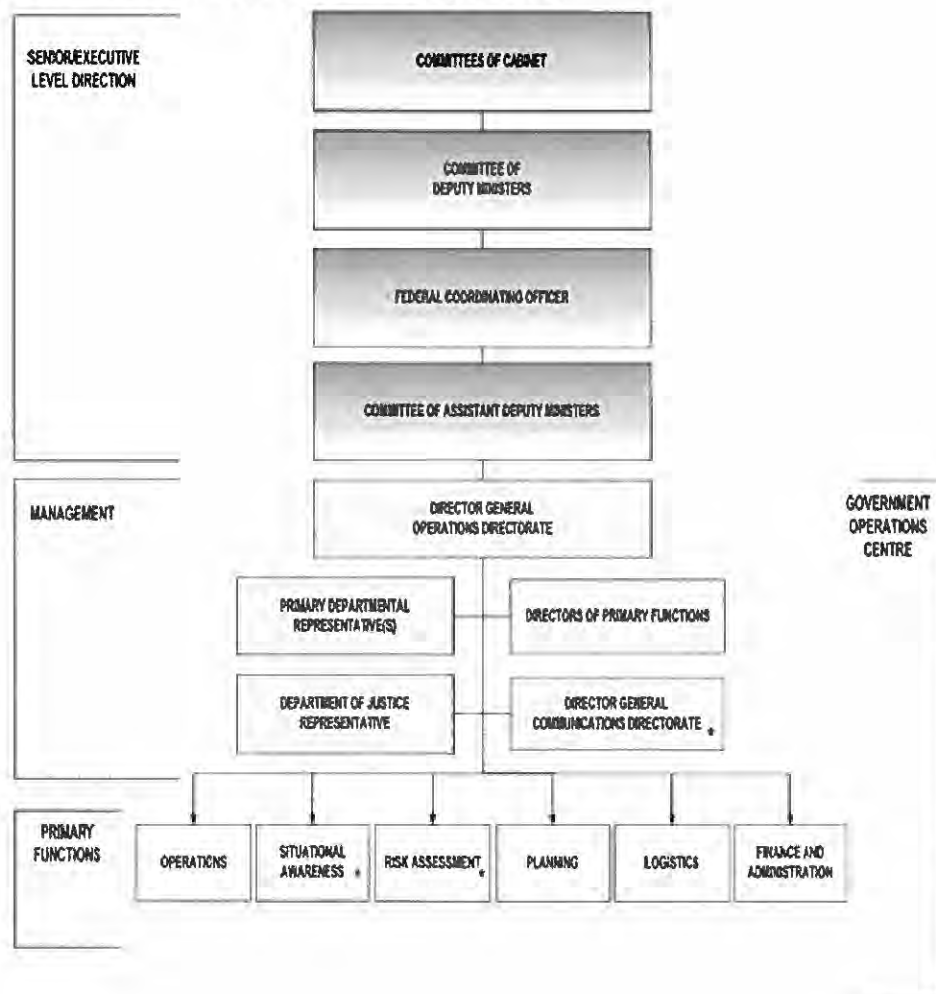
COVID-19 Governance Structure:

The overall governance structure for COVID-19 incorporates both federal and provincial/territorial governance bodies, and considers both the F/P/T health and emergency management networks.

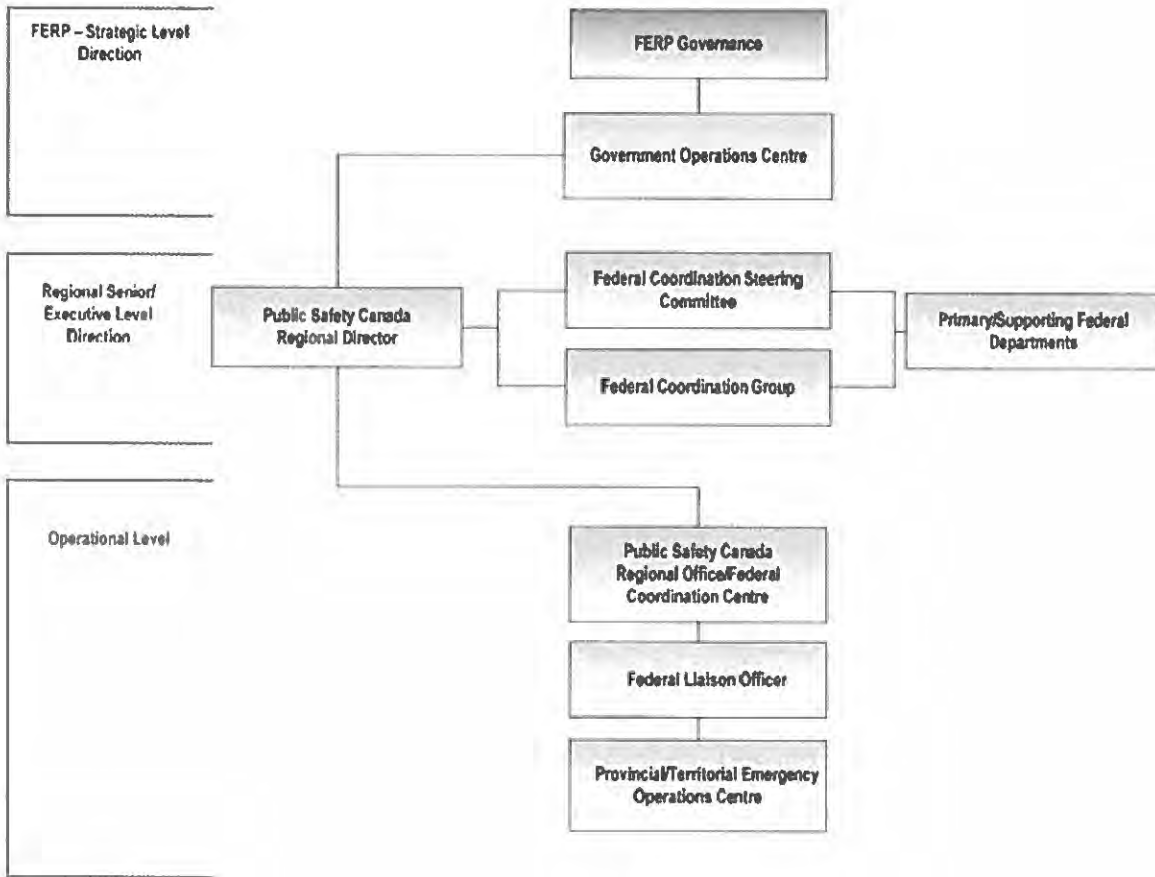
The federal structure is described in the *Federal Emergency Response Plan (FERP)*, and the Federal/Territorial/ Provincial governance structure is described in the *Emergency Management Framework for Canada*.

The diagrams below represent federal level governance at the national and regional level, the overall F/P/T governance structure, and a diagram incorporating the two structures to represent the current COVID-19 governance structure.

Federal National Level Structure (FERP)



Federal Regional Level Structure (FERP)



ANNEX B - Draft message to Prairie Federal Council Members, prepared by Public Safety Canada

Dear Prairie Federal Council colleagues,

We are writing to you today to invite you to a special meeting of the Prairie Federal Council, the purpose of which will be to enable our colleagues from Public Safety Canada (PS Canada), Shane Levesque, and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Dina Juras, to share information about ongoing efforts by their departments to ensure an integrated Government of Canada response to the current COVID-19 event.

This meeting will also provide an opportunity for a shared conversation about how Council members might best support the existing coordination efforts led by PHAC and PS Canada. In that context, Shane is proposing the establishment of a Prairies Region Federal Coordinating Group (FCG), at the executive level, to provide a forum for ongoing information sharing and coordination, as envisaged by the Federal Emergency Response Plan (FERP). To that end, please find attached an initial draft list of 18 potential member departments, which has been developed based on the membership of the three provincial Senior Leaders tables. We kindly ask that you review the list and make any corrections or changes that you might wish to propose, to ensure comprehensive coverage of federal partners within the region, for the new FCG.

The meeting is scheduled to take place via teleconference **[insert details here, including reference to agenda attachment]**.

Prior to the meeting, you may wish to familiarize yourself with the following:

- [Federal Emergency Response Plan](#)
 - NB: For those who are not typically involved in Emergency Management, pertinent contextual information can be found in sections 1.3, 1.6, 1.9, 1.11, 2.5, 2.8 and 2.9
- Version 3.1 of the Government of Canada Response Plan for COVID-19 (attached)
 - The purpose of the plan is to explain the potential contributions that federal departments and agencies could make, based on their mandates and capabilities
 - The plan does not explain "what" is to be done, rather it explains the federal potential to contribute to solutions. This aspect of the plan has been well-received by provincial / territorial partners, as it provides for flexibility in determining which federal capabilities might be required to support provincial / territorial plans, based on the circumstances within each jurisdiction
 - NB: The plan is quite detailed; to save time you may wish to do a quick scan of the following sections and focus on specific sections that might be of particular interest to you:
 - 1.5 – Relationship with Other Plans
 - 2.3 – Pandemic Economic, Health and Social Impacts
 - 3.2 – Strategic Objectives
 - 3.3 and Annex B – Governance
 - 3.4 – General Outline of the Response
 - 4.1 – Roles and Responsibilities
 - 5.2 – Cross-Cutting Areas
 - 6 – Communications

We look forward to meeting with you next week.

DM Dylan Jones
Chair of Prairie Federal Council

ANNEX C Draft Agenda Prairie Federal Council Special Meeting: COVID-19 Impacts and Federal Coordination in the Prairies, *Date/Time (TBC), Teleconference Details*

Draft Agenda

- 1) Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks (5 min) - DM Dylan Jones
- 2) Economic Impacts of COVID-19 (15 min) – DM Dylan Jones
- 3) GOC Response Plan for COVID-19 and Emergency Management Coordination in the Regions, (30 min) - Shane Levesque, Regional Director of Public Safety, Prairies and Northwest Territories
- 4) Public Health Measures and Risk Communications in the Prairies (15 min), Dina Juras, Regional Director of Public Health Agency (MB and SK), and Michael Spowart, Regional Director of Public Health Agency (BC and AB)
- 5) Roundtable – Information Exchange on COVID-19 Impacts in the Prairies (30 min) - All
- 6) Closing Remarks – DM Jones (5 min)

**PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA - PRAIRIE REGION FEDERAL COORDINATING GROUP
PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP LIST
(for validation by Prairie Federal Council Members)**

Name	Title	Location (City)	Geographic Area of Responsibility					Telephone Number	Email Address
			AB	SK	MB	NT	Other		
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada*									
Felicitas Katepa-Mupondwa	Director, Research, Development & Technology	Regina						felicitas.katepa-mupondwa@agr.gc.ca	
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Canada Revenue Agency**									
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Canadian Armed Forces**									

Canadian Food Inspection Agency*									
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Department of Fisheries and Oceans / Canada Coast Guard**									
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Parks Canada**									
Public Health Agency of Canada*									
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Public Safety Canada*									
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Public Services and Procurement Canada*									
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Transport Canada*									
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Veterans Affairs Canada									
Diane Peterson-Razos	Area Director	Winnipeg		X	X				diane.peterson-razos@vac-acc.gc.ca
Western Economic Diversification									
Carolina Calderon	Director	Edmonton						780-495-5771	carolina.calderon@canada.ca
Rhonda Laing	Director, Policy	Regina							rhonda.laing@canada.ca